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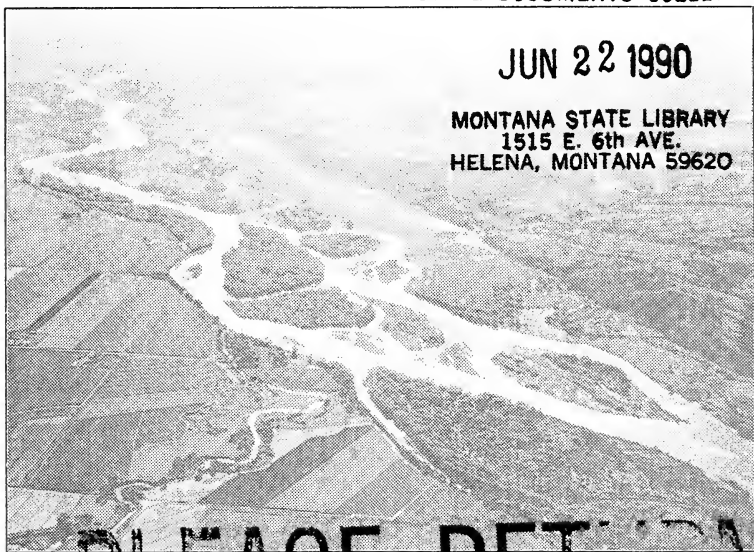
# PLANNING

*How you can help solve  
water-related problems in your basin*

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## PLEASE RETURN

*You and your neighbors have probably talked about water-related problems that affect all of you. Is there a chronic shortage of water in your basin? Pollutants you would like to see cleaned up? An unsafe dam?*

*You can solve these problems by working together and by taking advantage of the assistance offered through the State Water Plan.*

## LOCAL PROBLEMS, LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Local problems are often best handled by local people. But you may need help getting organized, finding solutions that are agreeable to everyone, or working your way through the technical aspects of water law, hydrology, or engineering.

The people who administer the State Water Plan will be offering help through a new *basin planning process*. This is *your* opportunity to help solve water-related problems in your basin.

## HOW DOES BASIN PLANNING WORK?

Basin planning begins when you discuss local problems with your neighbors. Concern about a particular issue may be more widespread than you realize. A *Basin Advisory Committee* could be formed to:

- Identify the problems
- Select those in greatest need of attention
- Define each problem accurately and thoroughly
- Identify solutions
- Implement the most effective solutions

Soon we'll be planning in one or two basins to test the process and help solve some immediate water resource problems. Once the process is underway, most of the planning will be done by people like you who want to lend a hand. All affected water users and interests--from ranchers and farmers to anglers and outfitters--should be represented on the Basin Advisory Committee. When people of diverse backgrounds work together to solve a problem, they learn to overcome differences and aim for solutions that will benefit everyone. This leads to fair, reasonable, and effective solutions.

## BASIN PLANS IN ACTION

The purpose of basin planning is to solve local problems. But who actually puts the plan to work? That depends on what the problem is and how it's being solved.

For example, chronic water shortages might be remedied locally by asking water users to install measuring devices at their diversions. On the other hand, repairing an unsafe dam might involve dozens of state and federal agencies, several downstream communities, and regional conservation and water user groups.

In either case, strong local support will be instrumental. The Basin Advisory Committee will play a key role in keeping basin residents informed of decisions that affect them. The committee can also encourage cooperation between all parties and monitor the progress of plan activities.

Membership is likely to change over the years, but the committees are meant to be permanent, providing ongoing leadership in identifying and solving problems. If citizens across the state support basin planning and if funding becomes available, then eventually every basin in Montana will have an advisory committee working to resolve local water-related problems.

## GETTING TECHNICAL HELP

Solving water-related problems can be difficult, but help is available. DNRC staff will offer technical and administrative assistance and will help committees do research, organize meetings, and write basin plans as needed. Basin Advisory Committees can also call on technical experts from universities and local, state, and federal agencies for advice.

## HOW DO BASIN PLANS FIT INTO THE STATE WATER PLAN?

Basin planning is the heart of the State Water Plan. The broad guidelines of the statewide plan simply ensure that people across Montana are working toward the same goals. This process is also flexible, acknowledging that different basins might use different problem-solving approaches.

Your committee will draw up a basin plan *section* for each problem to be addressed. The plan section will describe the problem and list a number of possible solutions, including those selected as the most appropriate. As you work, the State Water Plan Advisory Council—which includes representatives from public interest groups, government agencies, and the state legislature—serves as a sounding board for the ideas your committee proposes. While council members may help shape the basin plan, they can also promote and endorse the plan to their colleagues.

When the basin plan section is agreed upon, the council submits it for final approval to the DNRC director and the Board of Natural Resources and Conservation. Basin plan sections thus become part of the overall State Water Plan.

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# HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

In the future, there will be a variety of ways you can participate in basin planning, including joining a Basin Advisory Committee and attending public meetings. But right now we need your comments on the process itself, as it's proposed in this brochure.

Do you think basin planning will work in your area? \_\_\_\_\_  
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What should the role of the state be in basin planning? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Would you participate in this type of process? At what level (for example, serve on a Basin Advisory Committee, attend public meetings)? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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